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AUTHOR Henkle, Herman H.
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ABSTRACT

Prepared specifically for the Planning Committee, the Board of Trustees and the administration and staff of the James Jerome Hill Reference Library, this report reiterates statements and suggestions made in previous reports, but the restatement places emphasis on the sharpening of the Trustees' understanding of the program's objectives. Topics defined include: A Library Network, The Development of Collections, Centralized Processing, Central Reference Services, Switching Center Services, Cooperative Storage, Improvement of Communications Facilities, Explcitation of New Technology, and Notes on Financing Services. (MF)

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SPECIAL REPORT

TO

The BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The James Jerome Hill Reference Library

By

Herman H. Henkle

Director of Planning

LI 002 734

June 1970

The Board of Trustees
James Jerome Hill Reference Library

June 1, 1970

Ladies and Gentlemen:

My monthly report to the Planning Committee for April, 1970, closed with the following notes:

> When I was invited to undertake planning for the Board of Trustees, the stated reason for anticipating a two-year assignment was to develop not only proposals for a service policy, but to do the planning necessary to put this program into operation. A service policy was adopted by the Board at its annual meeting on January 20, 1970, with directives to continue study of acquisitions and building policy and to begin operations planning related to the new service policy.
>
> In order to assure progress toward implementation of the new service program, it is essential that the Planning Committee, the Board of Trustees and the administration and staff of the Library be fully in accord on the character of the program adopted and its implications for change in operation. A special report designed to assist in these objectives is in preparation for presentation to the Planning Committee before the end of May.

This is the report, except, that with the concurrence of the President it is addressed directly to the Board of Trustees. Much of this report will be repetition of statements and suggestions made in other reports during the past year, but restatement in somewhat different form and with somewhat different emphasis may be useful in sharpening understanding of the program's objectives.

The action taken by the Board of Trustees for the Library was to "commit its physical facilities and administrative organization to serve as headquarters for the cooperative program of academic libraries" and to "devote its service resources to serving as the central reference services and switching center for this group of libraries and their respective constituents." In effect, the potential of this decision was to establish the James Jerome Hill Reference Library as the operating service center for a true network of academic libraries, beginning with the CLIC group of libraries but expanding to embrace any other college or university libraries that might become affiliated with the Consortium.

As an <u>operating service center</u>, the Hill Library can play a role unique in the field of academic libraries. Instead of expending its resources to maintain a conventional and essentially discrete library that duplicates in substantial

degree the services available in other libraries, it can devote these resources to improving the quality of service in a group of libraries. It can do this by serving as a catalytic agent in every aspect of library service——the planning and development of collections; the processing operations involved in acquiring, cataloging and otherwise processing materials for use; the location of library materials throughout the network and in other resource libraries and the movement of materials from library to library within the network; the answering of reference questions within the scope of its own collection and staff skills and referral of questions when there are more appropriate sources of information; and application of new technological facilities to library operations and services both within its own organization and in cooperation with other libraries. The following paragraphs suggest some of the details of such a program in operation.

A Library Network

Before presenting details of operation it may be useful to examine the concept of a network of libraries.

In the sense that a network is an interconnected system, the most widely familiar example is the telephone system. Within a given system, each of thousands of telephones can be immediately accessible to every other telephone in the system by dialing the correct "address" through a central exchange. The key to the network is the central exchange.

Without a central exchange, a functioning network does not exist. It is this role that was proposed for the Hill Library among the academic libraries. The practical effect of this new role can be illustrated by two diagrams representing the communication channels between the eight CLIC libraries at present and when they are functioning as a network, with the Hill Library serving as the central exchange. The diagrams emphasize the obvious——that "a switching system is more efficient than one which allows direct interfacing among all libraries," to quote one of the CLIC librarians.

The diagrams are adapted from the map which appears in the Report on Program Planning (December 1969). Figure 1 shows the lines of communication which are followed by each CLIC library in seeking information from each of the other seven libraries when exploring availability of materials or services needed in the library initiating an inquiry. Figure 2 shows the Hill Library serving as the central exchange of the network. The dotted lines indicate the potential of adding the University of Minnesota libraries to the network. The ways in which the central exchange can function are suggested in the paragraphs which follow.

Figure 1

Lines of communication between the eight CLIC libraries as a cooperating group

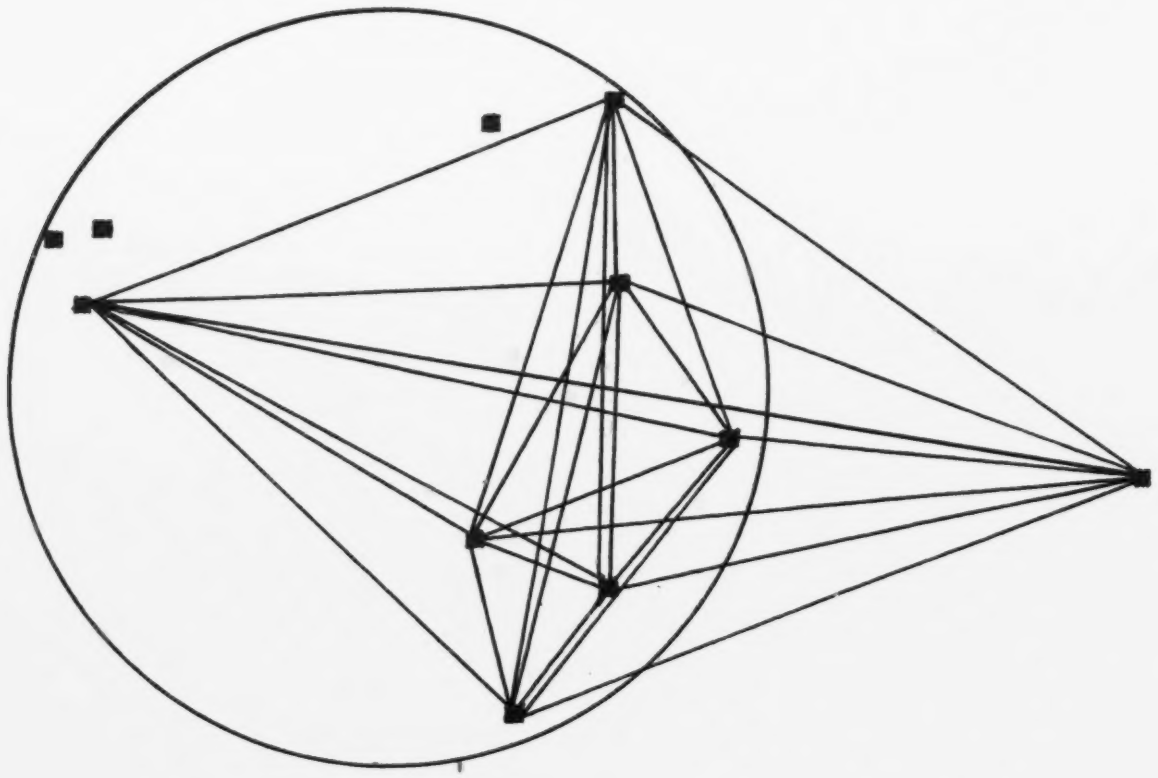
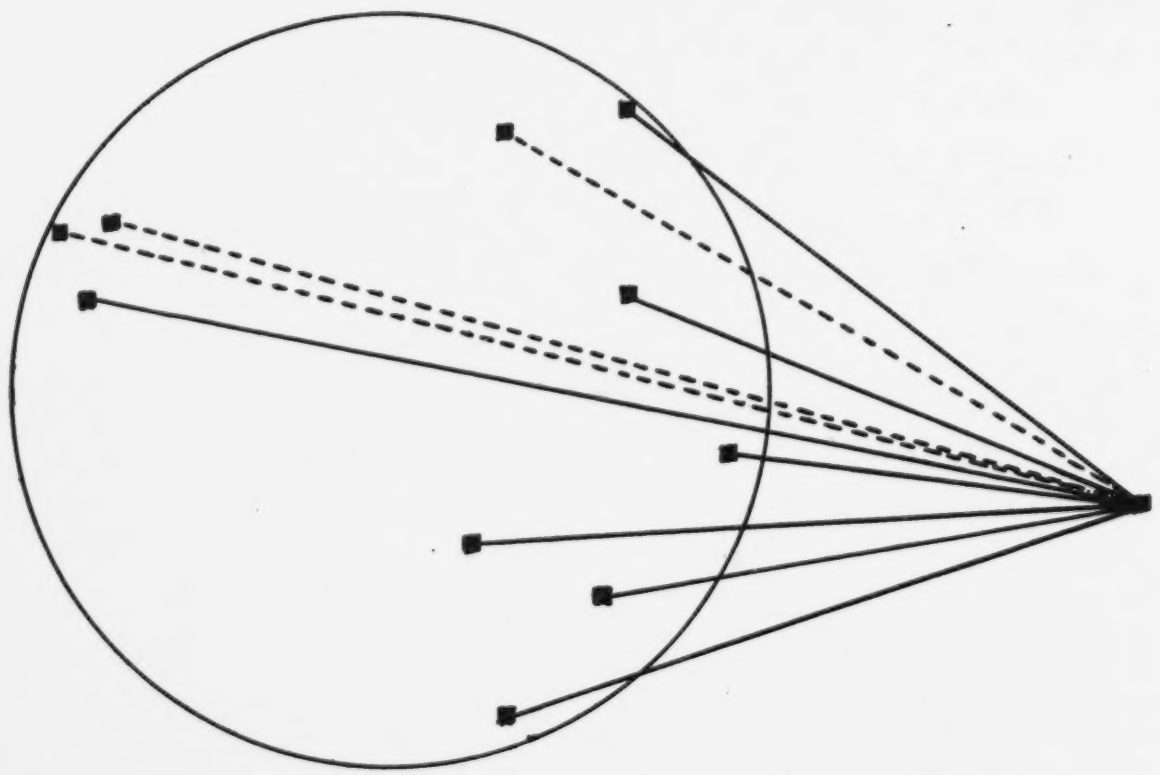


Figure 2

Lines of communication between the eight CLIC libraries, with Hill Library serving as the central exchange, and the potential addition of the three principal libraries of the University of Minnesota



Development of Collections

Working in close cooperation with a CLIC committee on collection policies and planning, the Hill Library can contribute to the total library resources in the following ways:

1. When the union list of periodicals——and later a union list of all serial publications——has been completed, this master record can be analyzed to identify (a) titles which are represented in fragmentary sets in two or more libraries; (b) less used titles that are available in more sets than are required to serve the needs of the CLIC libraries; (c) titles for which more nearly complete sets are needed than exist in the system; and (d) titles which would strengthen the resources of the system but are not available in any one of the libraries. Based on this analysis, recommendations can be made for more effective expenditure of funds available within the system for serial publications. The expectation that the union list of periodicals will be completed by early summer, 1970, indicates that this activity can be undertaken at an early date.

2. When a union catalog of books has been compiled, the Hill Library should check all considered purchases against this record and refrain from purchasing any titles already in the system, with exception of books which are likely to receive frequent use in its reference services. A beginning can be made now in this activity, based on the record of acquisitions of the CLIC colleges in late 1969 and continuing in 1970. In order for this objective to function most effectively, the Hill Library should delay all purchases of new books for the period required to allow for normal acquisitions to have occurred in the college libraries.

3. Hill Library can contribute to and serve as the resource library for expensive items acquired by joint purchase from CLIC funds, or make purchases of such items, selectively, from its own funds.

4. In general, Hill Library can make the most effective contribution to the total collections of the system by concentrating on acquisition of indexing and abstracting services too expensive for acquisition in most colleges, which in turn would strengthen the Hill resources for reference service.

5. Hill Library should continue evaluation of its present general book collection to identify (a) titles already adequately represented in the college libraries and (b) titles which would be more useful if located in one of the colleges, and make such disposition of the titles as may be indicated.

Centralized Processing

The prospects of centralizing the acquisitions, cataloging and other processing operations involved in acquiring and organizing library collections has been discussed

and argued among librarians almost ad nauseam. During 1967-1968, an extensive feasibility study of centralized book processing was carried out for a group of state supported colleges and universities in Colorado, with funding by the National Science Foundation. The study demonstrated a reduction of at least 25% in processing costs, reduction in the time lag normally experienced between selection of titles and their availability to readers, and other advantages. The result has been establishment of such an operation on a continuing basis, with costs underwritten by the cooperating libraries.

Centralized processing in the Hill Library for the CLIC libraries has been strongly recommended by some of the CLIC librarians and favorably discussed by most of them, reservations being centered principally in service requirements of the program which would need to be met to make centralized processing acceptable.

One of the first assignments of the Systems Analyst, when he reports for duty in July, will be on site study of processing requirements of the several college libraries and development of centralized processing procedures to meet these requirements.

Any saving of processing costs would be a welcome contribution to the college libraries, freeing funds for purchase of more books and/or improvement of services to readers. And for the Hill Library such savings would be available for support of its general program of services to the colleges.

The centralized processing program would contribute directly to other phases of the program, two examples being facilitating coordination of acquisitions and prompt updating of the union catalog.

Central Reference Services

As a function of the Library operating as a central exchange, a first activity of the reference staff of the Hill Library should be compilation and maintenance of current files of information about information and reference resources throughout the CLIC system and in other libraries—academic, public and special—not only in the metropolitan area but elsewhere as they may be useful.

These can take the form of union lists of reference books and bibliographical services; detailed descriptions of such special collections as the Minnesota Historical Society Library, and other libraries in the area as well as special collections in the CLIC libraries; profiles of special expertise of the reference librarians in the CLIC and other libraries of the area, including some of the highly specialized libraries in companies; profiles of subject expertise of faculty members in the colleges who would be amenable to receiving occasional requests for assistance; and development of subject guides to these several kinds of sources. Some parts of this

complex record of information resources might be prepared for publication and made available to other libraries.

Also as functions of the central exchange, Hill reference librarians would receive and respond to requests for reference service, normally through the reference librarians of the colleges, and would advise on other better sources or, as circumstances indicate, refer queries to these better sources for reply.

Switching Center Services

In addition to referral of reference inquiries, just mentioned, a primary service of the Hill Library should be location and supply of specific items not available in the local college libraries. Supply of items, when locations are determined, would be provided by transmitting the loan request to the appropriate library and reporting to the inquirer the actions taken.

Appropriate to the service program of Hill Library would be maintenance of delivery service as part of its normal operations. Currently, the CLIC organization is able to provide for one delivery call per day, three days each week, to each CLIC library. While this is much better than no such service, the optimum should be daily or even twice daily calls at each library as required to pick up and deliver items requested on loan or in photocopy.

An essential facility for fully developed switching services is a union catalog of holdings of all libraries in the network. Compilation of such a catalog is in progress for current acquisitions, but is urgently needed for retrospective holdings. Appropriate to the service program adopted by the Board would be assumption of responsibility for undertaking this project either through grant funds, if obtainable, or with the Library's own resources. This would involve microfilming the holdings records of each of the libraries and reproduction of the records in hard copy cards for filing in the union catalog.

It is anticipated that eventually such a union catalog record can be made available as an on-line computer catalog. This, however, will involve a much more costly conversion process, and will require extensive program planning. This will be another responsibility of the Systems Analyst, but cannot be expected to become available as an operating system soon, and probably not before 1972 or even later. An early decision to support preparation of a union catalog in card form could make the switching services proposed available during 1970.

Cooperative Storage

Most of the CLIC libraries, including the Hill Library, are faced by critical need for more space for collections. It has been placed high in the priorities of several of the librarians and is definitely in that position here. The most obvious solution is warehouse storage for less used books and periodicals. No specific

proposal for such a facility has been prepared, but no statement of a program can be complete without its inclusion.

Improvement of Communications Facilities

It is axiomatic that the success of this program will be largely dependent on means of communication. The principal channel is and may continue to be the telephone. The more effective the services offered, the greater the probability of their use. Some busy signals are normally expected, but excessive queuing, which could develop with Hill Library's present telephone facilities, would discourage use.

The need for, and feasibility of, several alternatives should be further explored. The minimum change would be more incoming lines, possibly with some lines that would carry a special number just for use in CLIC library incoming calls. The number of calls that can be handled at one time depends also on persons available to answer calls. This suggests possible need for recording receiver(s) to take request messages when staff members on duty are all involved with other calls.

The possibility of dedicated lines between each of the college libraries and the Hill Library has a definite appeal, but the present cost of $15/month/mile may exclude this alternative with the Hill Library in its present location. However, the possibility should be kept in mind.

When traffic reaches a substantial level, the installation of teletype service with automatic response may be required. Both teletype and dedicated lines should be tested on a pilot basis with connections in each instance, between Hill and one other CLIC library.

Exploitation of New Technology

As computer services become economically feasible, full advantage should be taken of the computer's capacity for storing and processing information. Control of serials acquisitions, production of catalog cards or copy for book catalogs, fiscal records involved in book purchases, circulation records and other uses which are already being made of the computer in scattered installations, should become part of the Hill/CLIC operations.

A first, and essential, step has been taken in this direction, namely, employment of a Systems Analyst. He can make important contributions to operations management aside from use of computers, but a major responsibility will be to study program requirements for use of computer facilities and to put these programs into operation as they are developed. A companion step is to establish liaison with other libraries with common interests in use of computers. We have engaged in conversations in this area, and expect cooperative planning to become active when the

Systems Analyst is on board. The most promising prospect for use of computer facilities is through developments in progress in the University of Minnesota Libraries.

Notes on Financing Services

The program originally proposed and here presented more in operational terms, was conceived of as a service program for the James Jerome Hill Reference Library, managed under the continued direction of the Hill Board of Trustees and largely funded by normal endowment income of the Library. In some part, the funds needed will come from discontinuing parts of the old program; in part from increased investment income.

On the other hand, the program is envisioned as offering new or improved services to the academic community, not one which takes over financial responsibility for parts of present programs. Hence, an activity such as centralized processing will be a service rendered on a reimbursable basis for at least direct costs. Overhead costs might be viewed as Hill's contribution to the improved operation.

References have been made above, also, to joint purchase of expensive publications and to increased frequency of the delivery service. In the first instance the Hill Library might or might not be involved in sharing costs of purchase. (It would, as a normal part of its own program, make some such purchases entirely from its own funds). In the second instance the Hill contribution can be the difference between present CLIC expenditures and cost of a full delivery schedule.

As the program develops, cost factors may become the determining element in decision of whether to engage in larger services. Under such circumstances the Hill Board would exercise its prerogative in deciding whether it could and should support the service, negotiate shared support among the CLIC libraries, or seek gift funds from private donors. Because of the program's emphasis on services in the field of education, possibilities may exist or may develop for grant support for some types of services through state and federal granting agencies.